



Quick Reference: Unix Commands

Commonly used commands and options on UW Uniform Access Unix computers.

The following format is used for commands:

Italic indicates a variable that you supply

Bold indicates exactly what you type

To display a command description from the Unix Manual:

man *command*

[A](#) | [B](#) | [C](#) | [D](#) | [E](#) | [F](#) | [G](#) | [H](#) | [I](#) | [J](#) | [K](#) | [L](#) | [M](#) | [N](#) | [O](#) | [P](#) | [Q](#) | [R](#) | [S](#) | [T](#) | [U](#) | [V](#) | [W](#) | [X](#) | [Y](#) | [Z](#)

Command	Action	Example
alias	Creates a temporary name for a Unix command.	alias <i>name command</i>
	To remove an alias:	unalias <i>name</i>
ansiprint	Prints a file to a printer connected to your computer.	ansiprint <i>file</i>
assets	Displays your account resources, use, and threshold.	
bg	Places a suspended job in the background.	
cat	Displays a specified file.	cat <i>file</i>
cd	Changes current directory to a different directory.	cd <i>directory</i>
	To change back to your home directory:	cd
	Directory abbreviations: ~ Home directory .. Parent directory . Current working directory	
chmod	Changes permission status for a file or directory.	chmod <i>code file</i> chmod <i>code directory</i>
	To keep a file private:	chmod 600 <i>file</i>
	To give everyone read permission:	chmod 664 <i>file</i>
compress	Reduces the size of a file and adds .Z to the file's name.	compress <i>file</i>
	To restore a compressed file:	uncompress <i>file.Z</i>
cp	Makes a copy of a file.	cp <i>file1 file2</i>
	To copy a file into a different directory:	cp <i>file directory</i>

	To inquire before overwriting an existing file:	cp -i <i>file1 file2</i>
diff	Compares two files and displays the differences.	
fg	Restarts a suspended job in the foreground.	
finger	Displays user information at the specified computer.	finger <i>userid@computer</i>
	To change your finger entry information:	chfn
fmail	Displays email status for all your accounts.	fmail
	To display your email forwarding address:	fmail -forward
	To set your email forwarding address:	fmail -to <i>userid@address</i>
ftp	Starts the file transfer program with a remote computer.	ftp <i>address</i>
grep	Finds lines in a file matching a character pattern.	grep -icvn <i>pattern file</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -i Ignores case -c Lists count of lines that contain pattern -v Lists all lines except those with pattern -n Lists line number for each found pattern 	
head	Displays the first ten lines of a file.	head <i>file</i>
	To display the first <i>n</i> number of lines:	head -n <i>file</i>
help	Displays an online help note.	help <i>note</i>
	To display a list of help notes:	help -l
history	Displays a list of your most recent commands.	history
	To repeat the <i>n</i> th command from the list:	! <i>n</i>
	To repeat your most recent command:	!!
jobs	Displays active jobs and their corresponding job numbers.	jobs
	To start a job in the background:	job &
	To return a job to the foreground by the job number:	fg <i>%number</i>
	To send a running job to the background:	<Control>z bg
kill	Terminates a process by its <i>process identification number</i> .	kill <i>pid</i>
	To use the strongest form of the kill command:	kill -9 <i>pid</i>
logout	Ends your computer session.	
ls	Lists the files and subdirectories in your current directory.	ls -l <i>ltra</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -l Lists long format -t Lists by modification time -r Lists in reverse order -F Lists file type with special character -a Lists all files including dot (.) files 	
lynx	Starts a text-only Web browser session at UW home	lynx